

The South on Reconstruction

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Claim : Reconstruction ended in consequence of the South's opposition because white Southerners did everything in their power to inhibit the reconstruction process.

Why was the South opposed to Reconstruction

- Republicans wanted to be refunded for their confederate bonds, but the Federal Government denied the validity of all confederate debts in the XIV amendment “neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion”¹
- Democrats in the south were angry in consequence of the 1876 presidential election between Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) and Samuel J. Tilden (Democrat) in which the electoral college results were disputed, and Hayes was deemed victorious.²
- “No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously...engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the [United States], or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof”³

1. U.S. Const. amend. XIV, 4 (amended 1868).

2. "The Collapse of Reconstruction," in *The Americans* (n.p.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 399

3. U.S. Const. amend. XIV, 3 (amended 1868).

Illegal Methods Used by the South to Combat Reconstruction

- The Ku Klux Klan was created “to restore white supremacy.”⁴
- The Ku Klux Klan terrorized the South, and intimidated African-Americans in order to dissuade them from exercising their constitutional rights
- The Klu Klux Klan also wanted to undermine the Republican governments in the South
- “Most of these same plain folk sought the overthrow of Reconstruction. Adopting violent tactics against the freedmen and their allies in their defense of white patriarchy.”⁵

4. "The Collapse of Reconstruction," in *The Americans* (n.p.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 394.

5. "The Life and Death of Plain Folk in Georgias Piney Wood," unsigned review of *Plain Folk*, in *Plain Folk*

The Legal Methods Used by The South to Combat Reconstruction

- The Amnesty Act was passed in Congress that gave the South more suffrage, adding more democratic votes to elections, and rebalancing congressional power which enabled the South to fight reconstruction from within congress. ⁶

- “Determined to re-capture the South, Southern Democrats “redeemed” state after state--sometimes peacefully, other times by fraud and violence. By 1877, when Reconstruction was officially over, the Democratic Party controlled every Southern state” ⁷

- “The abolition of the Freedmen’s Bureau” ⁸

The Democrats were angry with the results of the 1876 elections, and they created an ultimatum for the Republican Party as the democrats “had to approve the election results” ⁹

- The Compromise of 1877, reduced Republican influence in South Carolina and Louisiana, returning the state governments back to the Democratic party, which then “passed laws that restricted the rights of African Americans.” ¹⁰

6. "The Collapse of Reconstruction," in *The Americans*, 395.

7. Democratic Party Platform of 1868," PBS, <http://pbs.org>.

8. Ibid

9. "The Collapse of Reconstruction," in *The Americans*, 399.

10. "The Collapse of Reconstruction," in *The Americans*, 399.

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